



Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Department of Human Rights
Lucas State Office Building
312 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Telephone (515) 281-7283

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Thomas J. Vilsack, Governor
Sally J. Pederson, Lt. Governor
Kimberly Baxter, Director

The Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans (ICSAA) seeks to assure equality for Iowa's African American citizens. As an advocate, ICSAA works to ensure equal opportunity for, and to promote full participation by, African Americans in the economic, political and social life of the state.

The Commission on the Status of African-Americans, formerly known as the Commission on the Status of Blacks, was created by statute in 1988, and is in the Department of Human Rights, an umbrella agency in which Commissions maintain their visibility and autonomy. Nine citizens are appointed by the Governor (and confirmed by the Senate) to four-year terms on the Commission; serving as *ex officio* is the director of the Department of Human Rights.

The ICSAA's division director is the administrator of the Division, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The division director, along with one staff member and interns help enable the division to implement the programs and policies as determined by the division and Commission.

The ICSAA's mandate in the *Code of Iowa* includes the responsibility to study of the changing needs and problems of the African Americans in the state and the development and recommendation of new programs, policies and constructive action to the Governor and the General Assembly.

In addition, the ICSAA fulfills the duties of its mandates which include, but is not limited to the following activities and services:

- **Serves as a clearinghouse on programs and agencies operating to assist African Americans.** The *African American Journal*, a quarterly newsletter provides more than 1,200 persons and organizations via E-mail, with information on programs, services and issues of concern to African Americans. Information and referrals are provided directly by staff on such issues as legal rights, employment, discrimination, education, credit, welfare, domestic violence, rape, pending legislation, government, and fair housing.
- **Cooperates with governmental agencies to assist them in equalizing opportunities between men and African Americans in employment and in expanding African Americans' rights and opportunities.** Represents the needs of African Americans on interagency task forces and collaborates on studies of disparity.
- **Serves as the central permanent agency for the development of services for African Americans.**



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- **Publishes and disseminates information relating to African Americans**, such as the *Iowa African American Journal*; *Status of African Americans Annual Report*; and *Iowa African American Black History Month Special Edition Journal* and *Iowa's First*.

Sponsors educational programs to educate, recognize and inform the public about outstanding African American and their significant contributions.

- **Collaborates and partners with public and private agencies in joint efforts to study and resolve problems relating to the status of African Americans**, serving on the Governor's Education Achievement Gap Task Force, Friends of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission Advisory Board, I'll Make Me A World In Iowa Advisory Board, DMACC's Re-Entry Accountability Board, Iowa Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Advisory Board, Waterloo and Sioux City's Education Achievement Gap Advisory Committee, Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault – Women of Color Advisory Committee, Disproportionate Minority Confinement Committee of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, and Friends of Iowa Civil Rights Commission – Statewide Diversity Conference Planning Committee.

Priorities of ICSAA for FY06 include: education, health, justice and economic development.

Education:

- Increase African-American teachers in Iowa
- Increase cultural competency training for education professionals
- Expand cultural competency curriculum

Health:

- Increase Health Promotion of African-American

Criminal Justice:

- Decrease the disproportionate incarceration rate of African-Americans
- Decrease racial profiling

Economic Development:

- Decrease the disproportionate unemployment rate of African-American
- Increase support of African-American entrepreneurship